

REMARKS/ARGUMENTS

Claims 1 and 17 have been amended. Claim 1 has been amended to define a process for treating a polyimide in the form of a membrane comprising the steps of exposing said polyimide to a selected compound in a solvent selected from the group consisting of alcohols, ketones, ethers, esters and mixtures thereof, and maintaining said solvent containing said exposed polyimide and said compound at a temperature of less than 100°C and for a time to allow the compound to crosslink the polyimide. Support for the amendment is found at least at page 3, lines 11-19 and at page 7, lines 15-27. Claim 17 has been amended for consistency with the amendments to claim 1.

Rejection Under 35 USC 102(b)

The Examiner rejected claims 1, 3-5, 7-15 and 17-28 under 35 USC 102(b) as being anticipated by WO 99/40996.

Claim 1 as amended includes the feature of exposing the polyimide to a selected compound in the solvent selected from the group consisting of alcohols, ketones, ethers, esters and mixtures thereof, which feature is nowhere disclosed in WO 99/40996 (D1).

Exposing the polyimide to the selected compound in the selected solvent as defined by amended claim 1, allows post-reaction treatment of membranes to be carried out at lower temperatures. D1 does not teach or recognize the importance of using the selected solvents of the present invention. D1 teaches water as a preferred solvent. D1 discloses that other

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solvents could be used but does not provide any clear and unmistakable directions as to what these alternative solvents might be.

Claims 18-25, 27 and 28 which relate to products resulting from the processes of amended claim 1 and its dependent claims, and claim 26 which relates to a method of separation using the membrane according to claim 22, are accordingly also not disclosed in D1.

Applicant requests that the rejection under 35 USC 102(b) be withdrawn.

Claim Rejection Under 35 USC 112 (paragraph 2)

The Examiner has rejected claims 1, 3-5, 7-15 and 17-28 under 35 USC 112 (paragraph 2). Amended claim 1 now clearly sets forth the actual steps and parameters necessary to accomplish the process. Applicant respectfully submits that the rejection under 35 USC 112 (paragraph 2) should accordingly be withdrawn.

Applicant believes that claims 1, 3-5, 7-15 and 17-28 as currently presented are in condition for allowance and respectfully requests allowance of the application.

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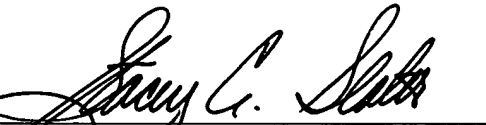
No new matter has been added by these amendments.

Respectfully submitted,

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